

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2003-NM-191-AD; Amendment 39-13475; AD 2004-03-31]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 727, 727-100C, 727-200F, and 727C Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 727, 727-100C, 727-200F, and 727C series airplanes, that requires repetitive open-hole high frequency eddy current inspections for cracks in the fuselage skin, strap (bearstrap), and doubler at the forward and aft hinge fittings for the main deck cargo door, and repair of any cracks found. This action is necessary to detect and correct such cracks, which could reach critical crack length and result in rapid decompression of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Effective March 24, 2004.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 24, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplanes, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ivan Li, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 917-6437; fax (425) 917-6590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Boeing Model 727, 727-100C, 727-200F, and 727C series airplanes was published in the Federal

Register on November 18, 2003 (68 FR 64998). That action proposed to require repetitive open-hole high frequency eddy current inspections for cracks in the fuselage skin, strap (bearstrap), and doubler at the forward and aft hinge fittings for the main deck cargo door, and repair of any cracks found.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comment received.

Request To Allow Designated Engineering Representative (DER) Approval

The commenter, the manufacturer, requests that paragraph (b) of the proposed AD be revised to alternatively allow DERs to approve alternative methods of compliance (AMOC) for the actions specified in paragraph (a) of the proposed AD.

The FAA agrees. The option to allow DER approval of AMOCs was inadvertently omitted from paragraph (b) of the proposed AD. Therefore, we have revised paragraph (b) of this final rule to include that provision.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comment noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the change previously described. The FAA has determined that this change will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Interim Action

We consider this AD to be interim action. If final action is later identified, we may consider further rulemaking then.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 195 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. We estimate that 133 airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD. We provide the following cost estimates to comply with this AD, per inspection cycle:

Group	Work hours	Hourly labor rate	Parts	Cost per airplane
1	7	\$65	\$0	\$455
2	8	\$65	\$0	\$520
3	8	\$65	\$0	\$520

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE



Aircraft Certification Service
Washington, DC

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

We post ADs on the internet at "www.faa.gov"

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

2004-03-31 Boeing: Amendment 39-13475. Docket 2003-NM-191-AD.

Applicability: Model 727, 727-100C, 727-200F, and 727C series airplanes, certificated in any category, as listed in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 727-53A0226, dated September 11, 2003.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct fatigue cracks in the fuselage skin, strap (bearstrap), or doubler at the forward and aft hinge fittings for the main deck cargo door, which could reach critical crack length and result in rapid decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

Inspection

(a) Perform an open-hole high frequency eddy current inspection for cracks in the fuselage skin, strap (bearstrap), and doubler at the forward and aft hinge fittings for the main deck cargo door. Do the inspection at the applicable initial compliance time listed in paragraph 1.E., "Compliance," of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 727-53A0226, dated September 11, 2003; except, where the service bulletin specifies a compliance time after the service bulletin date, this AD requires compliance within the specified compliance time after the effective date of this AD. Perform the inspection in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin.

(1) If no crack is found: Repeat the inspection within the interval listed in paragraph 1.E., "Compliance," of the service bulletin.

(2) If any crack is found: Repair it before further flight in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA; or per data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative (DER) who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle ACO, to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved, the approval must specifically refer to this AD. Within 12 months following a repair, implement an inspection program for the repair into the 727 maintenance program in accordance with a method and compliance times approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO; or per data meeting 14 CFR 25.571 (Amendment 25-54 or later) approved by a Boeing Company DER who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle ACO, to make such findings.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(b)(1) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

(2) An AMOC that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used for the requirements of paragraph (a) of this AD, if it is approved by a Boeing Company DER who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, to make such findings.

Incorporation by Reference

(c) Unless otherwise specified by this AD, the actions must be done in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 727-53A0226, dated September 11, 2003. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplanes, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Effective Date

(d) This amendment becomes effective on March 24, 2004.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 5, 2004.

Kevin M. Mullin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 04-3130 Filed 2-17-04; 8:45 am]

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